

Sculpture, Central India, Pala Period, 10th - 11th Century Buddhist
bodhisattva Manjushri, Lord of Wisdom. Image gilded copper, pedestal and mandala,
or prabhamandala, brass. Dimensions. Pedestal: H. 2 9/16", W. 6 1/6". Depth 4 11/16".
Mandala: H. 9 3/4", W. 6", overall H. 12 1/4". Figure alone: H. 6 1/2", W. 3 5/16".
The figure is inlaid with stones, and has pupils of eyes in silver. The deity in
lalitasana, seated at ease, is on an oval lotus throne on the back of a lion, the
deity's vehicle. The hands are in dharmachakra mudra, turning the wheel of the
Law. On the lotus at the figure's own left is a bound sutra, book of the laws of
the Order. Beside the Manjushri, at its own right a small deity sits on a lotus
with hands in anjali hasta a gesture of reverence and devotion. The main figure is fitted
with prongs that set into the lotus throne and into the mandala at the point of
the neck. There are a pair of holes for pronged objects on the floor of the
pedestal at either side of the deity and one hole in the small lotus near the back
of the lion perhaps for another small worshipper.

The prabhamandala is beautifully wrought, with a stupa (burial monument)
at its peak and rearing hippogriffs (mythological creatures half horse and half griffin),
on either side.

The image is closely related in style and form to Buddhist metal sculptures
buried in 1197 to save them from invading Muhammedan armies found in the ruins of the
Kirkihar monastery, Bihar, in 1930.